Dolson family thanks all for support | Your Caledon online newspaper

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Thursday, June, 02, 2011 - 10:10:43 AM

Dolson family thanks all for support

Dear Editor:
To all who attended the 150th Anniversary of the Dolson family farm, thank you for celebrating this Milestone with us.
We all enjoyed Good Friends, Good Music and a walk down memory lane.
The Dolson family will be making a donation to the Peel Archives documenting the history of early Chinguacousy and the Alloa area. This collection will be named the Thomas O. Dolson Collection in memory of my grandfather.

Tom Dolson,
Caledon

Invitation

Please join the Dolson Family
as we celebrate the
150th Anniversary of our Farm

Date: Saturday May 21, 2011
Time: 2:00 pm-11:00 pm
Location: Fradol Farm
12101 Creditview Road, Caledon ON

Beef on a bun will be served at 6:00 pm

Featuring Entertainment by the
WEATHERED KINGS
Our family and community heritage will be on display throughout the day

Please bring your own beverages and lawn chairs.
RSVP to Tom or Donna Dolson at 905-843-2052 or donna_dolson@hotmail.com

DOLSON FARM

The Dolson farm is located on the W½, Lot 18, Con. 4 W. Chinguacousy township, at the corner of 17 sideroad and Mississauga Road, now in the Town of Caledon, Region of Peel.

Names of Owners

1831 - Edward Troy
1832 - Joseph Cook
1842 - Joseph Hornsby
1846 - John Rickaby
1846 - Wm. Dunn Dolson
1881 - Eli Dolson
1926 - Clarence Dolson
1946 - McClure Dolson
1981 - Enid Dolson

About 1820 there was an exodus of Pennsylvania Dutch into Upper Canada following the War of 1812 and the Treaty of Ghent. Wm. Dunn Dolson came by wagon train, and possibly worked for another farmer for about 2 years. In 1922 he purchased Lot 17, Con. 5W from the crown. He married the surveyors daughter Margaret Flummerflet and had 10 children, then married Janet McLaren and had 9 children. To have farms for his sons he purchased 1400 acres in the area and in 1846 Lot 18 was purchased for £400. The farm was rough bush and had to be cleared, the logs were used to build a log house and a barn on the south side of the lane. When I came there the big stones were still being ploughed up where the buildings had stood. The farm was operated by an older member of the family for several years and transferred to Eli Dolson in 1881. During his years he built the present house about 1895 and a new barn about 1900.

Clarence Dolson had farmed on another farm and returned home in 1926. He remembered when the house was built and built the present barn as the other was burned in 1936. Clarence had two team hauling gravel to build roads and several road-horses that he showed at the Fairs.

Clure took over the farm in 1939 and started a milk herd, the milk cans were picked up at the road by truck and the milk was cooled by ice blocks cut and stored during the winter. We soon had milking machine and milk cooler. We pruchased it in 1946. We expanded the milk herd, and produced grain and hay.

Hydro was installed in 1925, then furnace, picture window and inside bathroom.

In 1954, a second house was built for farm help - a small frame house moved from Malton Airport site.

About that time the name "Dolloa" was given to the farm - from Dolson, Alloa and this was used as a prefix for the registered Holstein cattle.

The farm house contains many antiques, a Heintzman cabinet grande piano bought about 1895 and used by five generations, the oil hanging parlour lamp with a hand painted shade, settee, wash stand, crocks, irons etc.

Our three children Donna, Lenore and Helen atterded S.S." 6, Alloa School. This one room school was closed and the new Alloa school opened in 1961, Clure served on the Chinguacousy Twp. School Board 1954-1965.

The Dolsons attended Home Methodist Church erected in 1860 and later Home United Church and the earlier Dolsons were laid to rest in the Alloa Cemetery

(over)

In 1981 the farm passed to Enid Dolson. She lives in the farm house daughter Donna McElhone and family live in a new house on the farm. The land is rented out.

"Dolloa" Farm is a century farm 1846 - 1982 - 136 years.

Sept/82. Enid Dolson
R.R#4, Georgetown
L7G 4S7

1982
1846
136

NOV. 10/64

Farm History — Mrs. Frank Dolson

Lot 18 Third Line West West-Half Con. 3 Chinguacousy.

According to records in the Peel Registry Office, on the 28th day of September in the year 1829 the Crown granted a deed for 100 acres comprising Lot 18 in the west half of the Third Concession West of Chinguacousy Township, to one David McBride. In less than 2 months Mr. McBride sold his property for the sum of 25 pounds Sterling to William Whitesides. The farm changed hands twice again - first in 1832 to Reid Wright and in 1846 to Thomas Sharp - this time for the sum of 300 pounds. In 1850 William Sharp acquired the property for 400 pounds and held it until 1859 when he sold off building lots in what was to become the village of Alloa. These lots were in the names of the following owners:

Jacob Shook
William Keyworth
William Coventry
Samuel Coventry
Samuel Lowery

This left Mr. Sharp with 98½ acres which the then sold to William Dunn Dolson, a Pennsylvania Dutch immigrant, who had come to Canada in 1822 and settled on the 4th Line West at Lot 17. William Dolson paid 6000 dollars for the farm and was given the deed to it on January 12 1861.

Although William ~~Sharp~~ had built a sawmill on the sideroad, very few trees had been felled. So William and his four sons set to work. The one who made the chips fly hardest was Stephen, the youngest of 4 brothers. He had his eye on a young Mary Jane McKane of the 4th line west and no doubt she had her cap set for him too, for she often made it her business to pass the farm with the horse and rig while Stephen was wielding the axe and engage him in conversation. At any rate, on December 27, 1867 at Union they were married and in May of that same year Stephen Dolson acquired the deed for the farm. According to family legend, Wm. Dolson promised each of his boys $4000 if they would stay with him and not marry until they were 27 years old. Stephen was the only one to kick over the traces. He was anxious to get into double harness sooner and was married at the age of 24, thereby losing his ~~dowry~~ promised "dowry".

In 1874, seven years after their marriage, Stephen and Mary Jane each purchased 50 acres in Lot 19 to the north for $2285 apiece from Johanathan Rice who had held it for 20 years after obtaining it in 1841 from Joseph Vanderlip to whom it was granted in 1836 by the Crown. This 100 acres has been held intact with the home farm ever since.

For almost 100 years various small holdings along 17 Sideroad and the Third Line West changed hands frequently as the village of Alloa at the crossroads at first grew and then dwindled away. In 1945 Thomas Dolson, younger son of Stephen, bought the last lot from Fred Phillips on 17 sideroad who moved the house therefrom to the S.E. corner of No. 7 Highway and the 2nd Line West where it stands today.

IN June 1910 Thomas Dolson received the deed for the 98 acres on which the buildings stand. On New Year's Day 1919 he married Alma McClure of Huttonville. On the death of his father, he acquired the 50 acres to the north; and on his mother's death, the additional 50 acres to complete the 200acres of the farm. In 1954 the home farm along with an additional 114 acres was incorporated into Fradel Farms.Ltd. with Thomas Dolson and his son Frank Dolson as directors.

On August 1926 Thomas O. Dolson gave a plot of land at the corner of 17 sideroad and the 3rd Line 84 ft. by 160ft. for the use to the trustees of Home Congregation United Church for a church building as long as 12 services a year are held therein.

1 service a month

Nov 10/64

Farm History

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Pictures included in the place where it is mentioned

Include Anecdotes

personal achievements.

The original farm buildings were modest frame structures. A clump of lilacs~~bushe~~ and two pear trees mark the site of the house. The present dwelling and the barn were both erected by Stephen Dolson. The 14 room brick house was built in 1885 by the Laird Brothers of Norval who designed and built many of the houses and churches in the area at that time.

The dinner bell in the belfrey on the woodshed, which summoned the men from the fields in the days of horsepower now hangs silent and television in the 20ft. square dining room replaces the entertainment provided by local fiddlers when house parties were organized by the four young Dolson daughters in the"gay nineties". The front lawn which was laid out and circumscribed with evergreens for use as a seating area for church garden parties is now given over to pony exercise and baseball games and the open front porch has been replaced with a stone sunroom which now serves as the farm office.

The present occupants of the premises are the fourth generation Dolson:

Frank Dolson
Georgina Dolson (formerly Georgina Eccles)
Mary Jean Dolson aged 13
Stephen Dolson aged 9
Thomas Edward Dolson aged 4

February 17, 2005

FRADOL FARMHOUSE

The Victorian farmhouse at Lot 18, Concession 3W West Chinguacousy has been the Dolson family home since 1885. It replaced an earlier wooden frame house that was built just east of the big pear tree and lilac bush, on the south side of the lane. This frame structure had at that time been moved into the backyard of the new house, approximately in front of the present workshop. For many years it served to house workers, later chickens and was finally demolished in the late forties.

The new (1885) red brick dwelling with its yellow brick quoins and door and window lintels is a testament to the hard labour and profits from agriculture in that era. The Department of Agriculture provided plans for new farm homes at that time and the plan for this structure may have been obtained in that way. At any rate, the stone house built at Lot 23 Concession 5 West Chinguacousy has many similar features. It was built the previous year, 1884, by Thomas McKane, at the time the unmarried brother of Mrs. Stephen (Mary Jane McKane) Dolson. Mr. E. Lennox, who built the McKane home and the nearby Union Church, also built Toronto's Old City Hall.

The Dolson house was constructed by the Laird Brothers of Norval, who built Norval Presbyterian Church and other homes in that area.

The two white painted wooden verandas that graced the front and lane sides of the house, seen in old photographs, are typical of the Victorian love of decorative trim. The porch shelter on the front was needed to protect two doors that led into the living room and dining room (the dining room being the site of the stone fireplace construction at a much later date).

Thomas Oliver Dolson was the only child born in the house; his brother Albert being seven years older than Tom. At one time there were nine bedrooms in this home – two up the backstairs above the kitchen, used by the boys or farm workers; two used now as showroom, with partition removed; four for the daughters above the front part of the house; and one off the kitchen.

The daughters were:

Elizabeth (Lizzie)	first married James Lyons (deceased) and then married John Hunter
Harriet (Hattie)	married T.J. Leslie
Mary (Minnie)	married Herbert Nicholson
Ella -	married John McClure

When Albert married Letty Leslie he moved to the farm his mother inherited from her brother, Thomas McKane, at Lot 23 Concession 5W (west half) Chinguacousy.

T.O. Dolson married Alma Melissa McClure on January 1, 1919.

The summer kitchen and driving/wood shed completed the structure. Off this little kitchen to the north is a cloakroom for farm clothes and at one time an entry from

the concrete pad and steps leading into the house. The decorative tin ceiling is an unusual feature of this room. Also in the corner stood a big iron sink and pump. The cistern is under the floor. No longer used, it brought soft water from the rooftop right into the house. You can see the tin entry to it in the north corner. Floors in both kitchens were 1 ¼ " maple tongue and groove to take the rough workboots and scrubbing required. The rest of the house is pine floored, with the expectation that it would be covered with carpets.

The wainscoting in both kitchens has stood the test of time. (A small cookstove here replaced the larger one in the main kitchen.) The northwest door and the low southeast window obtained cross ventilation. A lot of canning and pickling took place out there. Family bees for clearing, threshing and harvesting corn took place. Sometimes up to 17 or 18 men with big appetites kept the girls and mother busy at that time of year. You needed lots of pies, biscuits, cake, pickles, applesauce and gravy from the huge roasts of meat required. Vegetables came in quantity too from the garden but puddings also helped fill up the empty spaces. These men worked hard so the least you could do was give them a good meal. Quips flew around the table and a feeling of joviality and neighbourliness prevailed. We miss that today.

The woodshed floored with heavy, wide planks provided enough space for storing wood for the stoves of the day. Alma preferred coal for winter fires because there was less chance of having your stovepipe catch on fire from coal than with wood. Coal cost $6 per ton and was trucked back from the United States by Gordon Sharpe, a neighbour, who delivered loads of cattle into the States.

Above the summer kitchen an open attic storage area can be reached by ladder. Old furniture and such went up there.

The pantry, a room to the north of the kitchen, and the rooms up the back stairs, all had painted woodwork in a soft blue-grey. Woodwork in the downstairs rooms was stained and varnished, the workmen using special combs to affect the appearance of more valuable woods. No extra varnish has been applied to either living or dining room. Frank and I burned off the many dark coats of varnish on the kitchen wainscoting with a blowtorch and scraped it down so I could use a lighter shade. It has been painted gray, white and ivory in the intervening years. For some reason the summer kitchen was painted with dark green wainscoting, cream walls and wainscoted skirt above the sink and the hand pump beside it. That room was a laundry and washroom.

An outside cellar stairway was built as a trapdoor leading down from two sloping doors near the front double woodshed doors. The kitchen cellar steps led down from the east kitchen corner. Above this stairway was the stairway leading up to the two back bedrooms.

The little hallway up there had a window and a long wooden bar with sturdy iron hooks for extra off-season clothes. Three bedrooms were without closets but each had the same row of hooks, except the one off the kitchen, which was probably used for overnight guests, who would have left the kitchen door open for heat from the stove. The north room off the summer kitchen also had a window. In all, 34 windows to be cleaned and polished plus (today) four doors with glass panes.

In 1949 when Frank and I were married, it was decided to divide the house again, as it had been when Tom and Alma married. The time the big dining room (about

18' square) became our living room and the former kitchen, our dining room. With insulation, oil stove heat and piping brought in for the cupboards installed in the summer kitchen, it became my year round kitchen. That worked fine for four years until we lost Alma to cancer. For the first few years we joined T.O. in his kitchen and I gave up my new one to whichever European couple came to work with us. In addition to the kitchen, these couples used the back upstairs bedroom, where an oil stove provided them with additional heat.

The first were Kathleen and Albert. These couples had been promised a year's work on a farm and decent living quarters in return for their passage if they stayed out their term. Most of them moved on to the city at the end of their year, where public transportation was available and they could both be employed.

When Tom and Alma converted their former bedroom into their new kitchen, cupboards and a sink were build on the inner wall and a stairway to the basement was added where the clothes closet had been. (This is the present day showroom)

During these years, T.O. contracted Harry Logan, who lived in the stone house above present day Mountainview Retirement home, to build the sunroom and fireplaces. He planned and had the Credit Valley stone cut to build the sunroom in place of the front porch. (The etched -glass paned door in the summer kitchen is all that remains of that porch – the dining room door into the porch is stored above the woodshed) Now we each had a fireplace and Alma and T.O. had a new entrance with stone steps. How she enjoyed that sunroom and fireplace! The floor was brown rubber tile with bright red flowered curtains on the windows. The big brown couch/bed sat along the far wall; the oval table in the opposite corner with a green cloth covered Morris chair beside it (today covered in brown vinyl). (The chair was a community gift when her parents, Darius and Melissa McClure, left their farm near Huttonville to move to Toronto.) (Later they moved to the Victoria Hotel on Main St North to own and manage the hotel)

In the Living room sat the antique Victrola and records, which were given by the Dolson family to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Stephen and MaryJane Dolson. The sideboard next to the sunroom door was a McClure piece and I was told, 'very old'. I can't vouch for the back of the sideboard. I don't know the history of the other cabinet – it was 'woodshed furniture' in my time. T.O. didn't remember buying the chesterfield suite. It may have belonged to his parents in their later life. Its original covering was brown velvet cut in a rose pattern (currently in my living room covered in tapestry). The community and friends at a presentation and dance in Norval Hall gave the chesterfield suite (now in Tom and Donna's living room) in honour of our marriage in 1949.

The present day dining room has a trophy cabinet redesigned from its original use as a wardrobe in the former home of Uncle Fred McClure. The piano came from the upstairs of Mt Pleasant Church when we bought it ($36.00) after the United Church of Canada closed the church in 1949. The lighting fixtures are the originals from 1927 when hydro was installed in the house. The maple bed and dresser we bought from Frank's Aunt Louva and Uncle (Francis) Mack when they moved to Florida. The mirror is much older (I replaced the glass, which was probably unwise, lowering its value).

I have no idea how old the kitchen chairs are or the ash table with maple legs. I wonder how many cardgames have been played on it and how many business deals worked out on it.

The clock in the dining room once had plaster covered pillars painted gold. Wilfred Leslie, Frank's first cousin made the shelf it sits on, for Donna and Tom. I don't know the history of the schoolmaster's desk below it or the cradle upstairs, but they are both very old.

The brown mohair covered couch/bed came from the Victoria Hotel and had been bought for Mr. Frank Thompson who made his home there after losing his wife. (He had no children). He sometimes wished to bring friends into his room. The oak ends and arms are built in the Morris style of the day (1920's). He was Secretary for the Peel Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company for many years – a fine man.

As a child, Hattie Leslie, Wilfred's mother said she watched the plasterers fill a mold with wet plaster to create the rosette decoration for the living room ceiling. When it was dry 'enough' they raised it into place. Unfortunately it fell to the floor during the night and they had to do it all over again.

The dining room served well the receptions of the four daughters who married and the many, many parties Alma and Tom gave in their day - even Frank and I in ours and now Donna and Tom continue on.

There were cast iron stoves for the living room, dining room and kitchen and even a small cookstove for the summer kitchen or possibly Stephen and Mary Jane after the house was divided.

Finally, a big hot air furnace was built in the basement. It was mostly coal-fed when coal was no more than $5.00 or $6.00/ton. In 1960 a big new oil furnace with a big electric fan/blower replaced the coal burner. Now a much smaller gas furnace replaces that one.

The well to supply hard water was lined with round fieldstone rocks and lay southeast of the house, just west of the maple tree and across from the steps to the sunroom. If you forgot to leave the pump handle raised up in the winter the water in the cylinder might freeze and you would have to thaw it out with a kettle of boiling water.

When the upstairs bathroom (indoor plumbing!) was installed around 1946 the well water supply was found to be inadequate, so a new well was bored in the garden area, east of the pear tree. Eventually this one gave out. Water now comes from a new well far back on the farm.

The original drainage system of small clay tiles around the basement floors led into a dry well in the north corner of the house. This had to be pumped out dry, by hand, regularly to keep dampness out. That has been replaced with a sump pump, leading out to a ditch in the field north of the house. In the small yard, in the northwest ell of the house, is a 'dry' well, which is deep enough to receive this water. Whatever man was available, in the 30's it might have been a tramp looking for a meal, was told to go out and pump it 'dry'. Of course, the coming of electricity brought an electric sump pump instead of the hand pump. Also in that yard, nearer the showroom, is a big 10' wide cistern. Rainwater, which collected in the cistern, was better for washing clothes and

cleaning as it dissolved the soap better than the hard well water. We would usually run out of soft water shortly after Christmas until the April rains came.

In the days of the wood stoves, a rectangular tank at the back of the cook stove kept the water warm. Otherwise, a big copper teakettle covered in nickel plating stood near the front of the stove with hot water for tea and cooking. We didn't waste water - it had to be carried in by pail.

Water for the barn came from a well about 20' out from the big south wall and pumped by a windmill which pumped it up into a large 10' wide plank holding tank on the top barn floor to be fed by gravity to the animals below. Sometime, I don't know when, the windmill collapsed under runaway horses and a new well was drilled close by to supply the needs of an ever-growing herd. Unfortunately, though plentiful, it had a salty taste, but it served until the garden well supplied both house and barn. The planks of the dismantled tank served as a form for the concrete cistern that was built at the house in the forties by the men building the stabling.

The men who did the concrete stabling in the barn came from the Mennonite area of Ontario. At the same time, they also constructed the concrete porch with its black scrolled wrought iron railings, which replaced the wooden side porch. When Tom demolished the eastern gangway to the barn he found great flagstones in the structure, which he used to create the present sidewalk. (Never get rid of anything old, it might have a new use someday!!!!)

The basement, or cellar as we called it then, had 3 rooms. The room under the kitchen was left with an earthen floor, as it was intended for the winter storage of apples, winter pears, potatoes, carrots and other vegetables, which needed the moisture to help them keep. The ceilings were all rough plastered and white washed, along with the walls for sanitation.

I don't know if the butter making by Mary Jane took place in one of these rooms. I suspect it did, for she won a gold medal and a set of dishes at the Industrial Fair in Toronto (former CNE) the year after her house was built.
This provided a special bonus price for each pound of butter she could ship to one of the prestigious grocers in Toronto. (Steve and Karen's double butter box was used for that purpose.) Of course the cows, (milked by the women) were all Jerseys. (Years later on the advice of Frank's Dr. Brown of Sick Children's Hospital, the whole herd was tested for T.B. Most of these Jerseys and some Holsteins as well were condemned and marched out the lane to slaughter and disposal in the early 1920's)

Mary has a little remembrance from the carpenters working on the new house. It is a little child's chair, built by them and given to little Minnie who grew up and married, but had no children. She and her husband, Herb Nicholson, had a lovely farm on Highway 10 at Lot 19, west side. The little armchair was made from scraps of five different types of wood used in building the home.

Workmen from the neighborhood over the years included Harold Silverthorne and later Doug Hogg for electrical work. Bill Hazel of Cheltenham built the kitchen cupboards. Elmore Archdekin, a World War II veteran, did all the plumbing in my day. Later, Tim Carney did the downstairs bathroom and Elmer Carney did the washroom.

Peatson installed the oil furnace, cleaned each year by Bill Sproule. (Bill had been a prisoner of war in the German camp from which the Great Escape was made). Emerson Boucher, a veteran of the Italian campaign, did my wallpapering and another veteran of Hong Kong, who survived those long years in prison there, A. Adams, once painted the house. (He hammered or sang at his work the whole time.) Even our mailman was a good-natured veteran then.

Cedars were planted to border a lawn from the road right down to the new location of the old house. I believe a government gift of young spruce trees was offered to farmers who wanted to plant a windbreak for their house. All the Dolson homes appear to have taken up on this offer in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Stephen did the same planting down both sides of the lawn. The cedars gave way first and now most of the spruce are gone. A few Manitoba maples edged the back lawn but Frank got rid of them all except one to anchor the clothesline and another to hold the children's ever occupied swing. Both are gone today. T.O. and I planted the maples at the front (a soft maple and at the back a Norway). He also planted the Austrian pine along the lane. The pine that stands alone in the lawn I can't explain but it is a reminder of the white pines harvested from the farm to build both the house and barn. First cut pines have very few knots. When I was a new bride I counted all those trees one day. At that time there were 93 trees around the lawns, but that was 56 years ago. Winds and time took their toll (and Mary took one out with her car on an icy day in 1970).

The open front lawn made it possible to host the garden parties held each year with plenty of seating and a constructed platform near the front door to allow for the paid performers to come and go from the house. These were money raising activities of the local farm associations. The young folk especially enjoyed the freedom of the seating (planks) and dimly lit lawns.

Alma planted a border of blue iris in the bed in front of the new sunroom, including peonies and other perennials. Then she scattered poppy seeds over all. They nodded their tall rose heads all summer long. Her kitchen windows had wooden window boxes of geraniums that the men carried to the barn for the sinter. Coming from Huttonville she was a good gardener and had at least 3 long rows of raspberry canes with black and red currants as well. She was generous in calling in her neighbours to help themselves to the fruit and the rhubarb too. Early apples were St. Lawrence, which were ready in September. The two trees provided an overflow of applesauce, pink in colour, ready for hungry men in the fall threshing and corn cutting bees. A Clapp pear tree and Seckling (small) pear lasted a few years and the winter pear tree lives on.

A beautiful rambling rose hung on the wire fence that circled the orchard and garden, but was rooted out when new lines were put in to connect the well to the house. (In the winter of 1959 the water lines froze where they passed under the lane. By mid-April, when they thawed out, we thought it wise to put in a new line six feet below the surface, since the old one was only buried four feet underground).
A small white moss rose bush stood left of the garden entrance, a gift of Jennie Lyons, Edgar's wife. I think some old pink roses persist to the left of the bay window in the ding room and Donna has propagated the periwinkle from a small clump I took from my grandmother Lyons' bed when Uncle Fred sold the farm.